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Students' Views on Peer Evaluation & Professionalism: “*Getting away with it*”

Gabrielle M. Finn & Marina A. Sawdon

Corresponding Author:

Miss Gabrielle Finn
School of Medicine and Health
Durham University, Queen's Campus
University Boulevard
THORNABY
Stockton-on-Tees,
England
TS17 6BH

ABSTRACT

Background This study describes how undergraduate medical students perceive professionalism and their views on peer evaluation as a tool for measuring professionalism.

Summary of work 12 undergraduate medical students participated in focus groups after completing a peer evaluation. Focus groups were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were coded using a grounded theory approach. This study has since been expanded to include Durham University's current cohort and the University of Liverpool students.

Summary of results Two main themes emerged; students' perceptions of how professionalism relates to them (subthemes were attributes, (ir)relevance to students and teaching & learning of professionalism) and views of the design of a peer evaluation tool (subthemes were; online environment, eliminating anonymity, justifying choices and promoting reflection).

Conclusions Students appear to know professionalism should be shown in an academic situation; however they feel that as students they should be able to “get away with it”. Thus, students regard professionalism as only relevant in a clinical context, and call for leniency in preclinical years. Students are accepting of peer evaluation for measuring professionalism; preferring an online environment, with the opportunity to justify their decisions. Students report peer evaluation as a driver for reflection on their own behaviour.

Take-home message Students view professionalism as irrelevant outside of the clinical environment